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Letter dated 9 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to convey to you the following.

In paragraphs 6, 7, 8, 10 and 11 of your interim report of 30 April 2001 on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) (S/2001/423), mention is made of a plan for the reconfiguration of the Force that would reduce its strength to 4,500 all ranks, that is to say to its level prior to 24 May 2000. Then in paragraph 11 of your report, you recommend that the Force should maintain a strength of about 3,600 until the end of January 2002, after the departure of the Irish contingent and the reduction of the Finnish contingent by some 350 troops.

In your interim report you also recommend that, at the end of July 2002, the Force should be reconfigured as an observer mission consisting of observers from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization supported by two infantry units for reasons of security and logistics.

Given the foregoing, my Government is of the view that the reconfiguration of the Force in the manner you recommend would create a climate of instability in the area that might undermine the sense of security and safety created by the presence of UNIFIL and might impede the restoration of the very international peace and security of which you speak in paragraph 6 of your report. This is particularly likely in the new circumstances prevailing in the region, which are such that you are no doubt fully aware of their gravity and their negative implications.

My Government would also like to point out that, at the relevant time, you confirmed Israel's withdrawal to the Blue Line but that you did not confirm that this withdrawal had been completed up to the internationally recognized boundaries, as stipulated in Security Council resolution 425 (1978). It should also be recalled that Lebanon has placed on record its reservations with respect to the Blue Line, as reflected in your report of 16 June 2000 (S/2000/590).

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For all of these reasons, my Government conveys to you its insistence on the need for the Force's strength to remain at its approximate level prior to May 2000 and prior to any subsequent modification. It does so out of concern for the restoration of international peace and security by the Force performing its functions in the optimum manner pending the achievement of a comprehensive peace, as you state in paragraph 6 of your interim report.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 40, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sélim **Tadmoury**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative